

REMARKS/DISCUSSION:

This Amendment E is being filed within two months after the shortened statutory period for response that ended on January 28, 2006. Accordingly, a Petition for a Two-Month Extension of Time is included within the transmittal letter filed herewith.

By this Amendment E, claims 23-27, 29, 32-34 remain pending in this application. Claims 21, 22, 28, 30 and 31 have been canceled. Claim 23 has been amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 28, which was previously objected to.

Amendment and/or cancellation of claims is not to be construed as a dedication to the public of any of the subject matter of the claims previously presented. Further, Applicant(s) reserves the right to prosecute the subject matter of such claims in continuation and/or divisional applications.

Applicant has carefully studied the outstanding Office Action. This Amendment E is in response to a Final Action is intended to be fully responsive to all points of rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application are respectfully requested.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 21-27 and 30-34 stand rejected as being anticipated by Idemoto (E 0 456 470) as stated in the Office Action. Claims 21, 22, 30 and 31 have been canceled and the subject matter of (previously objected to) claim 28 is now recited in claim 23.

In order to continue prosecution in response to a Final Action, Applicant is placing the claims in condition for allowance. Applicant, however, continues to disagree with the Examiner's assertion that Idemoto anticipates the now canceled claims. Applicant has previously addressed Idemoto in his

Supplemental Amendment D of November 15, 2004. Applicant incorporates by reference those arguments in this Amendment E.

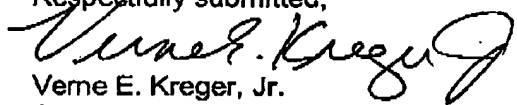
Conclusion

Applicant submits that in view of the claim amendments, the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) have been overcome and that the invention is now patentable over the cited prior. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider all rejections and pass this case to issue.

Should any minor points remain prior to issuance of a Notice of Allowance, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees, which may be required to Account No. 10-0750/END-778/VEK.

Respectfully submitted,


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